

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland

The Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland uses Blackbaud NetCommunity® to develop their online fundraising and communications strategy.

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- CHSS wanted to consolidate their data as it was “all over the place.”
- CHSS selected Blackbaud NetCommunity based on its integration with The Raiser’s Edge, their online strategy and ongoing support.
- The solution has enabled CHSS to be operational even when they’ve not been in the office!



- Coronary heart disease is one of Scotland’s biggest killers.
- Stroke is the main cause of disability in the community.
- Chest illnesses of various kinds are the biggest single reason people use the health service.

These stark facts illustrate the challenges facing Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland.

The charity was formed a century ago to help in the fight against tuberculosis. That fight was won, but today the battle goes on against ailments which continue to blight the well being of the nation. Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland’s strategy is to direct resources on a number of fronts.

Background

Chris Marks is the head of supporter fundraising at Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland and explains how Blackbaud has been helping him achieve his targets and streamline his fundraising.

“We’ve been using The Raiser’s Edge® for over ten years and more recently we’ve started using NetCommunity to help understand our supporters and donors a bit better.”

“Our data was all over the place,” he says, “and we couldn’t see how to drag it all together. We could see that ‘Mr. Smith’ was giving a direct debit to us, but had no idea if he was also taking part in any of our events or even sponsoring other people who did.”

After a mass of research and looking at all options from buying in software to designing systems from scratch, Chris says that Blackbaud’s NetCommunity came up better on every count. “The open source solutions are out there, and you could build your own, but what happens when it goes wrong?” he says. “You don’t have anyone to call and you’re on your own.”

The Solution

Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland’s most immediate goals were to take online donations, accept registrations for events online and to have an email marketing capability and NetCommunity ticked all the boxes.

Installation was made easier because the charity was already using Raiser’s Edge. During the process, a donation form was designed which the charity is still using. It is tweaked for each appeal as it happens, but has remained basically the same as it does what it set out to do so effectively.

The most complicated part of the procedure was the event registration module. This took the longest to integrate because there are so many different aspects to it, from registration to thank you messages, through providing details and setting up individual sponsorship forms. But it's been worth it.

"We have an event in the north of Scotland, the Glenlivet 10K," says Chris. "We did it for the first time last year and launched it in a bit of a hurry. We had a maximum of 400 entrants and thought most of them would be traditional, paper based registrations. But in the end 62% of people registered online and we filled all the places in three weeks and had a waiting list."

"I can't help thinking that this level of response wouldn't have been replicated if it hadn't been online or if it was on a third party site."

Chris is keen to stress that using NetCommunity means a seamless, integrated branding throughout. Sometimes using a third party site to pay, for example, can lead to a change of colour, or a different address at the top of the page. "You go to the supermarket to buy a cabbage and they don't send you next door to pay," he says, "so I don't think that should happen with something like this online either. It's a nicely integrated system."

The Results

One of the unseen advantages of NetCommunity has been the ability to sign people up when other methods would be unavailable. For example, over the Christmas and New Year period Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland's offices were closed, but when the events team came back to work, they found they had a stack of registrations for the Glenlivet 10k 2011. "If we hadn't had NetCommunity in place there wouldn't have been anyone there to answer the phone and take registrations," Chris says.

So all in all NetCommunity has been a very worthwhile investment for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland. "We probably underestimated how much the public would react to it and use it online," Chris says. "We had in mind a point at which we would recoup the investment costs and we got there in about half the time."

Hiccups are a fact of technology, but any problems have been dealt with quickly by Blackbaud. Chris says it is a very open company to deal with. "I find Blackbaud a really friendly organisation. I feel like I can speak my mind, which I think is really important when you've got a partnership between different organisations. There are people on the end of the phone you can call up and they are there to fix your problems and that's something that's really reassuring."

"When we were considering our options the thing we kept coming back to was the fact that by going with Blackbaud there was one person providing our solution from start to finish, one company, one set of people we could go to and so far they've not let us down."



Blackbaud software and services used by Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland

- Blackbaud NetCommunity
- The Raiser's Edge